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DILEMMAS OF THE HOLISTS

HERE, "holist" is intended to mean anyone whose primary effort is to see things whole—to omit from his thinking no important factor bearing on the meaning of the human situation. The conscious attempt to pursue holistic thinking usually appears in a period of disillusionment, when big theories of progress have failed to work and cherished assumptions begin to seem untrue. There are many ways to speak of the present, but that it is a time of disillusionment is hardly debatable.

Take the theory of progress which originated in the eighteenth century among the few, and was adopted by the many in the nineteenth century: that through the control of physical nature by science and of human nature by politics, a golden age of happiness and prosperity lay ahead for all mankind. What happened in the application of this theory?

One reply would be that science, on the whole, succeeded in its purpose, but that politics failed. This, at any rate, was the view of the nineteenth-century revolutionists who, observing the dramatic advances of science, decided that the time had come to make politics "scientific." So, in the course of a half-century or more, the doctrines of Scientific Socialism emerged, and with the explosive combination of angry righteousness and scientific infallibility the Communists set about their revolution. The result, however described, does not fit very well with the eighteenth-century dream.

In the United States, where eighteenth-century political conceptions are held to have matured with better success, another category of problems appeared. On the one hand are the complexities introduced by what John Kenneth Galbraith has called the "Affluent Society." It can be argued that the Americans did in fact achieve the goals set by the eighteenth century. They got both the freedom and the prosperity, yet found themselves so beset by other difficulties that it did not occur to them that their lives were now "fulfilled." The new problems divide into three classes. First is the manifest inadequacy of parliamentary democracy to guide and control an industrial system which in power, complexity, and unpredictable effects grows faster than human understanding of what is taking place. The political rationalizations for the control of the society of the nineteenth century do not apply effectively to the society of the twentieth century. The devices for regulation do not relate to the new foci of power. This makes necessary constant political improvisation, with both technical and moral confusion as a result.

The second class of problems afflicting the society of the United States arises from the fact that a large segment of the population is not "affluent" at all, and lives in continuous fear of unemployment. There are, in fact, a new kind of "poor" in America. With the general rise in the standard of living and the technologization of so many facets of daily life, people need a lot more money simply to qualify as being among the poor. This is not merely a psychological situation, but a plain fact of urbanization and of the circumstances created by an increasingly man-made environment. The poor city-dweller is much worse off than the poor country-dweller, since he is confronted by a juiceless mechanical world instead of a natural environment. His impotence and dependence tend to become absolute, with profound demoralization as a result. This "Other America," as Michael Harrington named it, is the skeleton in the closet of the Affluent Society.

Technology is also at least superficially responsible for the third set of problems—those growing out of the pressures and requirements of

the Cold War. Probably the worst thing about the Cold War is the encouragement it gives to the human tendency to look for scapegoats. Nobody really knows what our society would be like, how we would be feeling and what we would be doing, without the threat of war. We have taken the prospect of war into our lives so intimately and made it so much a part of our psychological and economic existence, that very little of our thought deserves to be called "normal." The Cold War relieves political thinkers of nearly all responsibility except that of a proper hostility toward ideological foes, and the emotions attached to ideological slogans have rendered impartial analysis almost impossible. On the other hand, thought which succeeds in leaving the Cold War out of account becomes so theoretical as to lose touch with reality.

From the foregoing, one thing seems quite plain: the play of these various frustrations in relation to human hopes for a better life and a better world makes analysis and criticism exceedingly difficult. How can you say what actually did go wrong with the eighteenth-century dream? In such circumstances, over-simplification becomes practically the hobby of all mankind, which only adds to the confusion.

There is a fourth factor affecting our judgment, which ought not to be left out of our calculations, since it may eventually prove to be the one stable element in our thinking. It has to do with the psychological realities in goal-seeking and goal-reaching. There may be a great difference, that is, between what men expect from getting what they want, and how they actually feel when they get it. In *The Revolt of the Masses*, Ortega wrote:

> . . . we are now beginning to realize that these centuries, so self-satisfied, so perfectly rounded-off, are dead within. *Genuine vital integrity does not consist in satisfaction, in attainment, in arrival*. Cervantes said long since: "The road is always better than the inn." When a period has satisfied its desires, its ideal, this means that it desires nothing more, that the wells of desire have been dried up. That is to say, our famous plenitude is in reality coming to an end. There are centuries which die of self-satisfaction through not knowing how to renew their desires, just as the happy drone dies after nuptial flight.

This is a psychological fact, but it is not a fact you can do much with, politically speaking. Ortega's judgment applies to America to the extent to which the Affluent Society represents the fulfillment of the eighteenth-century dream. And it applies so much that, a few years ago, the President of the United States caused a committee to be formed to look for the goals of American society. We have got the inns—we have built them all over the country—and they aren't just inns, but the last word in hotel luxury, with television sets as plentiful as Gideon Bibles. Having all this, we don't see any good roads ahead. No wonder one of the candidates for the presidential race next fall is concentrating on the psychology of the nineteenth-century road—the way we traveled, seventy-five or a hundred years ago, when we were still looking ahead for the inn of material prosperity.

It goes without saying that if people had all reached the inn at about the same time, and enjoyed equally luxurious rooms, and if we didn't have a cold-war rival to cope with, we might be able to look at the present situation with more hope of understanding it. But who is going to listen to a few psychologists and philosophers preach against the frustrations of the acquisitive society when it is so easy to raise a storm about people who want to take our good things away from us? And how are you going to convince people who still feel poor and deprived that "materialistic" goals are a bad thing? A conspiracy of events, which becomes a conspiracy of motives, effectively hides from us the emerging wisdom of the age, forcing it to have only a personal, not a social application.

There are epochs in history when the legitimate appetites of the hungry collaborate with the demand for human dignity. But after the reform or revolution, when people begin to be well fed, and the political forms of dignity are

available by constitutional enactment, this collaboration stops. The young, whose fathers ate not enough, soon learn to eat too much. Dignity now calls for a new association, but the appetite for it is lacking. This is not a divorce between means and ends which afflicts only the United States and the European democracies. From behind the iron curtain we hear rumbles of dissatisfaction with the errant young who do not understand, it is said, the devotion of their fathers to the cause of the revolution. Ugly bourgeois preoccupations are showing themselves in the coming "communist" generation. And why not? What's all the bother about? The revolution, yes, but now that we have our inns, too, why not enjoy them? The logic is irreproachable, but unappealing to the oldsters who remember the austere commitment of the revolutionary road.

You could say that the broad problem of the twentieth century is to find a political philosophy which equates with felt human needs, and that serious complications arise from uncertainty about both our feeling and our needs. Meanwhile, the fact remains that the obscurely expressed longings of a large number of people exhibit no tangible relation to the dynamics of existing political action. These longings are existential, not political. Their very existence amounts to a kind of political heresy, since they are evidence that political action is not a universal panacea.

It follows that examination of these needs now proceeds in a separate, non-political department of human life. It takes place in that large region of inquiry covered by depth psychology and psychotherapy, and spreads out into the vague area known as "self-help" and mental health generally. The goals of psychological health, it develops, cannot be given quantitative definition, nor "legal" definition. The balance and strength of maturity are not the fruit of political action. These qualities are wholly dependent upon the human individual. The social situation is a gross frame of individual development, but its circumstances do not stand in direct causal relation to that development. All that the social situation can do to the individual situation is make the qualities of maturity seem irrelevant, when the social situation is one of extreme injustice. Establishing justice does not create maturity, although a just society provides the milieu in which maturity may be recognized as a desirable goal.

The tragedy of the present lies in the fact that while the quality of individual life is widely admitted to be the central problem of the age, this problem cannot be admitted politically because of the unevenness of the socio-political development of the modern world, and the contradictions and tensions which have resulted. To find a solution, we need to look at the psychological roots of the cold war, and to understand, if we can, the arrested political development that it represents for the world as a whole.

Margaret Ellis Wood's qualified defense of the welfare state (in last week's Frontiers) supplies a clue. It needs to be admitted, she points out, that the massive organization of society in behalf of the good of all its members is rooted in the emotion of brotherhood and the principle of the equality of all men. It needs to be acknowledged that these are sound roots, indispensable ethical principles, and this can be done without defending the manifest shortcomings of welfarism on a statistical and bureaucratic basis. To explain the welfare state historically, as the response of the deprived masses to the selfishness and indifference of an aristocratic elite, is not to admire the delusions it has fostered nor to claim that it represents an apex of socio-political development.

The historic fact is that there have been too many races, nations, and classes of "chosen people" in the world. The human race is *one*, and every attempt to divide it into the well-deserving and the ill-deserving will produce disaster in the long run. The maintenance of inequality through political and economic power was itself enough to establish power as the necessary instrument of reform, and the welfare state is the agency men

have created to perpetuate the power and administer the reform. This has been the tendency of an entire age, both East and West. The identification of Soviet Communism as the polar opposite of Western Capitalism is extremely misleading. Both systems involve welfare states, the differences being in the degree of power held by the political agency and in the fact that Communism represents a doctrinaire political metaphysic which holds itself above criticism and which has attempted to replace all concepts of cultural value with applications of its political credo, while the capitalist welfare state has been a pragmatic evolution, a socio-economic system which has submitted to the process of socialization, not from the pressure of revolutionary forces, but by the practical logic of political accommodation to the facts of a highly industrialized mass society. The two systems are held at a great ideological distance by reason of the violence of the Communist revolution, the long years of armed antagonism to the Russian experiment on the part of very nearly all the other nations, the terrorism and autocratic thought-control of the Communist Party, the fright of the "haves" at the rising power of the "have-nots" all over the world, and the fanatical claim of the Communists to a monopoly of every kind of significant truth—political, scientific, cultural.

The obvious conclusion is that, in a world become technologically one, there can be no conscious political evolution of a constructive character so long as the major determinant of both the foreign and domestic policies of the most powerful nations is ideological rivalry and antagonism. As long as the thinking of the spokesmen of these nations is shaped by the motives of partisan polemics and weighted by the justification of military gambits and jockeying for position, no one can be expected to take seriously the *thought*-content of what is said. Yet from the point of view of the United States, there is no need to jettison the principle of freedom of thought, of press and speech, in order to undertake an understanding of the motives of the Bolshevik revolution, and to give what explanatory reasons may be found for the subsequent course of the Soviet state. To understand and explain is not to like or approve, but simply to put historical events on a rational basis. It can be pointed out, for example, that the deeply engrained European consciousness of class distinction has never existed in the United States, and that Americans have never felt the emotional need to overthrow a ruling class which added insult to injury. It might be noted that the United States has an indigenous socialist tradition, dating from Edward Bellamy, which has nothing in it of the class struggle. There are already many "socialist" developments in aspects of the American political economy (see Seba Eldridge, *Development of Collective Enterprise*), and these have brought no overt or intentional curtailment of the freedom of American citizens. The objective study of these changes, in both cause and consequence, can hardly proceed to any clear conclusion, to say nothing of a comparison with the Soviet pattern, during the present emotional climate of opinion. Actually, a non-political interest in what the Soviets have been trying to do, and what they have done, might work miracles in reducing the defensiveness of their spokesmen and their fear that we do not intend to let them bring their socioeconomic venture to whatever beneficent maturity is potential in the undertaking.

This is not just a question of "getting along with the Russians." The great need of the advanced nations of the world is to get out of the trap of political controversy over questions which have no political solution at all, and to get on with the task of learning how to be better, wiser human beings. If we find ourselves able to put the political argument aside, we might be astonished to find the Russians almost as eager to do the same. There are plenty of evidences of a strong but submerged humanist strain in Soviet life, today. If the Russian leaders are given no excuse to suppress expressions of non-political humanism for reasons of political "morale," it could come to the surface rather suddenly and give another

coloring to Soviet cultural life. This could mean practically the end of the cold war with the Soviets. The same methods might be used for reconciliation with the Chinese, although this might take longer.

The argument for such policies need not be simply in order to "avoid war." This argument is so obvious that it hardly needs repeating. A more pertinent view is that we need to relax the tensions of the ideological contest before we can think seriously about the kind of a society we need for the kind of people we want to become. We can't even do any intelligent political thinking during the cold war, and political thinking is the least of our requirements.

There is another condition that must be fulfilled, if we are to free ourselves of the blinders of political preoccupation. Our welfare state is distorted by its partisan service to people with white skins. This makes it a bad state for the millions of Americans whose skins are dark. A system which indulges, where it does not enforce, systematic injustice can hardly move toward a higher state of society in which men may seek individual maturity. People who are tolerant of obstructions to the full rights of other men have no real claim on a free life for themselves. Inevitably, they are pulled back into the past—the past of revolutionary political issues—to learn all over again the elementary doctrines of the fundamental equality and rights of all men. In this sense we have gotten a little ahead of ourselves in the expectation of reaching "maturity." We have learned its importance, and we taste its flavor now and then, in distinguished individuals, but we can't really have it without wanting it for everyone. James Boggs, a radical Negro leader, puts the situation well in his recent book, *The American Revolution* (Monthly Review Press, 1963):

> The struggle for black political power is a revolutionary struggle because, unlike the struggle for white power, it is the climax of a ceaseless struggle on the part of Negroes for human rights. Moreover, it comes in a period in the United States when the struggle for human relations rather than material goods has become the chief task of human beings. The tragedy is that Americans cannot recognize this and join in this struggle. But the very fact that most white Americans do not recognize it and are in fact opposed to it is what makes it a revolutionary struggle.

This long-delayed revolution for the non-white races cannot be put off any longer. It is a matter of some moment that among the Negro rebels are men who are much more than rebels—men who have come to believe that the struggle for rights needs to be associated with ends reaching far beyond the demand for political recognition. In some areas of the struggle, the existential reality of human dignity in Negroes makes a greater claim to attention than their political demands, showing their realization that political rights are only the external frame of the quality of being human, and not its substance. In these cases, the fight for justice is hallowed by a rare maturity, beside which the external distinction or accident of race becomes a small matter in both fact and feeling—as indeed it should be. For the Negro, this is evidence of his profound sense of the meaning of this period of history; for the whites, it is instruction in the fact that their awakening to the human reality of the non-white races is coming very late—almost too late for the white man to retain his self-respect before the thronging millions of Asia, Africa, and South America, who, throughout the long cycle of political emancipation in the West, have been treated as little more than objects or "things."

These, then, are the major causes of the interruption of the development of modern man—the delegation, through indifference and neglect, of ethical responsibility to the institution of the state, and the childish egotism of the white-skinned peoples who have enjoyed, for several hundred years, the initiative in the making of history. The equations are simple, and infallibly correct: You cannot have peace without justice, and you cannot have growth into wise and harmonious human beings without peace. This is explanation of the fact that the peace movement,

at its core, sooner or later turns revolutionary in its rejection of the social processes and customs which allow and confirm injustice. Serious pacifists could not enjoy a peace which rested upon false foundations, nor can they encourage the superficial hope for a peace which is without the sacrifice of all special privilege and preferential advantage of some nations and races over others. And out of this view comes the moral conviction that high achievement, when it turns into mere acquisition, ceases to be evidence of human excellence.

Meanwhile, the alchemy of what might be appropriately called a psychological mutation is silently having its effect. More and more of the young are refusing to relate with the "normal" processes of the acquisitive society. Students of the new psychology are recognizing that the qualities of maturity, of self-actualization, of good human relationships, have a clear functional kinship with the ideas of ancient mysticisms and philosophical religions. It is as though we are attaining historical continuity with the distant past, by at last beginning to assimilate the hard lessons of Western civilization—that religion is not a substitute for self-discovery, but has value only as its means; that scientific knowledge of the world of nature and its forces cannot free men of their bondage, but will only make that bondage more complex, unless they remain continuously aware that freedom is not the fruit of either power or technical know-how.

It is the difficult task of the holist to give these realizations wider currency, even in these days of extreme anxiety and fearful longings for the kindlier optimisms of our youth. It is difficult to gain assent for the proposition that we must begin to treat *all* human beings as human beings, and not as ideological pawns. It is difficult to lead men to the realization that their salvation and their good do not depend upon devotion to a political formula, and that the good of any political formula, however excellent at the time of its invention, will diminish in direct proportion to its substitution for the rich life, independent decision, and generous responsibility of individual human beings. For when the formula is held to be supreme, men become the victims of its glib interpreters, and then the wholeness of life is subdivided by partisans and self-seekers, is falsified by slogans, signs, and symbols, until, finally, the day of the locusts comes.

The work of the holist is difficult. He has on his side only the fact that there is nothing else to do.

REVIEW
SOME "NATURALS"

THE small, independent publisher is almost always of interest to MANAS editors (and we assume to MANAS readers too)—MANAS being an example of a very small and persistently independent publishing adventure. In addition, the Naturegraph Company, publishers of Healdsburg, California, qualifies for attention because it publishes, primarily, in fields which are the time and space, the breath and blood of philosophy: natural science and history, conservation, and anthropology. Naturegraph was founded in 1946 by Mr. Vinson Brown; he, his wife, and three children manage the business from their ranch ten miles from Healdsburg. Mr. Brown is the author and editor of several of the books he publishes; he is a lecturer on travel and natural science and history; he has "explored, traveled, and collected wild life through much of the western United States and Canada, the jungles of Panama and Costa Rica, the Philippine Islands, and the China and Indo-China coasts"; and he is heard occasionally on Pacifica Radio's KPFA in Berkeley.

Anyone who has spent some time hiking and camping in the mountains, deserts, and beaches of the West Coast will know the dumbfounding variety and versatility of the earth and life found there. One can walk in a day through several distinct regions of geology and living forms. The proliferation and variety are overwhelming; used to tags and handles, the human mind—particularly the mind untrained in zoology, botany, and geology—approaches a panic of incomprehension. It is, of course, not necessary to give names to the parts of such an abundance in order to know it; but if one goes a step or two past the names of the parts, one begins to know them and the whole they make up: in the designs of their natural history and science, in the rhythms of their seasons, in their ecological relationships. Then incomprehension turns to curiosity; a curiosity which grows as its satisfaction raises the level and scope of the questions asked.

Probably, the professional naturalist does not begin where the amateur begins—in a subjective and emotional response to nature—but with an intellectual challenge, and there is plenty for the keenest minds to analyze. However, both naturalist and weekend hiker—if their love is genuine and their curiosity deep—eventually blend the emotional and the intellectual in their research projects and camping trips. Such a blend gives the best chance to approach, know, and belong to nature.

To this end, and serving amateur and professional alike, Naturegraph publishes a series of guides to specific regions and on a variety of topics: for example, *The Pacific Coastal Wildlife Region,* by Dr. Charles Yocom and Ray Dasmann; *Common Seashore Life of Southern California,* by Dr. Joel Hedgepeth; *Handbook of California Birds,* by Vinson Brown and Dr. Henry Weston, Jr.; *An Illustrated Guide to Fossil Collecting,* by Richard Casanova; and many others. These guides are relatively inexpensive, beautifully illustrated (photographs and drawings), and succinctly and accurately written. For the classroom, slides and film strips are available. Many of the books and pamphlets are limited to subjects within California and the Western states, but a significant number are general enough to apply to most of North America.

Naturegraph also publishes or distributes a few books only slightly related to natural science and history: stories and poems about animals, camping, etc. Several books about the North American Indians and one about Vinoba Bhave are of particular interest to MANAS (Vinoba Bhave has contributed to and has been often quoted in MANAS, and John Collier's *Indians of the Americas* has been the focus of a widening circle of interest in Indians and their cultures). Unfortunately, the book about Bhave—*India's Social Miracle,* by Daniel P. Hoffman—is poorly organized and written. The book is noteworthy

mainly because of the direct contact the author had with Rajendra Prasad and Vinoba. The many direct quotations taken from his conversations with these men make this book a valuable source for anyone interested in Bhave, India, and the Gandhian Movement.

Warriors of the Rainbow, by William Willoya and Vinson Brown and *Four Remarkable Indian Prophecies,* by Annie Kahn, Olin Karsh, and Blu Mundy are about Indian dreams and their prophetic content. The prophecies do not seem really so remarkable; the "proofs" given that Indian holy men could predict events is not convincing; the attempts to draw parallels and comparisons between the Indian religions and the tenets of Christianity and Buddhism makes one wish that the authors had read more anthropology and psychology—one thinks of Jung's writings on archetypes and anthropology. And, too, one is put off by writing which runs to sentences like these: "In the words that follow we have written simply and wholly what we believe, believing that only God is the Knower," and "For the light of truth shines best through open minds." But the accounts of Indian lore, life, and dreams makes fascinating reading, and the fold-out color drawings are exceptionally fine.

Tapestries in Sand, by David Villasenor is an account of Indian sand-painting, including aspects of the methods, rituals, and symbols involved. Here, again, the colored drawings are unique and beautifully reproduced. The book is a catalog of the more common symbols used in sandpainting: "Father Sky and Mother Earth," "The Whirling Logs" or Swastika, "The Coming of Age Initiation," "Navajo Creation Story," and many others.

In these myths, stories, and beliefs, and even in the designs representing them (in the case of sand-painting), one begins to feel something about the way these Indians lived and thought. Without wanting to return to their world—and we could never forget enough to recreate it anyway—we sense that we are more like these "primitive" peoples than we are different from them. Our technology and stores of factual knowledge notwithstanding, we might even admire the ability the Indians seemed to have had to accept with equanimity the essential mystery of the human condition. Our technology and "knowledge" have hardly touched that mystery. The ability to be in a world of acknowledged unknowns and live with and in our existential mystery is something we do not seem to do as well as those first Americans. (For a catalog of Naturegraph Publications, write to Naturegraph, 8339 West Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, California.)

COMMENTARY
THE ROAD IS BETTER THAN THE INN

THE passage quoted by Ortega from Cervantes (see page 2) may be taken as a reply to the arguments of the Utopians, whose energies are so much given to dreaming of the future that many of them do not know how to live in the present. To them, the present is contemptible, intolerable. You might say that in their thought they have socialized human longings, but colored them with a kind of collectivist avarice, making their struggle for power embody contradictory emotional components. They are lustful for the common good, angry at delays, and stridently self-righteous in their contentions. Any implication that a man may live a good life in the present is met by sneering rejection.

The other side of the question, however, must have its statement. It is true enough that much of the present *is* contemptible. There is always a sense in which the Utopians are right. There is the likelihood, if not the certainty, that people who show no interest in the sort of changes the Utopians talk about are themselves quite content with the status quo and indifferent to the welfare of those whose lives are ill served by the present.

The chief difficulty in resolving this contradiction lies in the fact that when men do find a balance between these two aspects of their lives—between work for the future, for better social or other arrangements, on the one hand, and a full expression of themselves as human beings, here and now, on the other—they find it intuitively, and not by any plan or program that can be incorporated in some progressive scheme. This sort of private resolution tends to be ignored or held to be worthless by the Utopians, since their methods of arousing interest in what they believe ought to be done are not calculated to encourage people to make the best use of their present circumstances. Those circumstances must be made to *change*, and to admit them to be a matrix of any sort of growth would be to compromise their utopian ardor.

What can be done about this? Nothing short of a complete redefinition of Utopian ends can help, it would seem. Even the *methods* of change must somehow lend themselves to a fullness of human life. These, as we say, must be "organic" to the kind of lives we want to live, and not a series of preparatory steps. The goal, in short, is not an inn, but a proper road. The good life would then be recognized as a form of endless movement along the way, and never a static, final condition.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A NOVEL ABOUT TEACHERS

IF Jerry Weil's *The Teachers* (Signet, 1963) is in any way an engrossing book, it is because of the subject-matter rather than its presentation. The characters are stereotyped, the situations contrived, and the morals drawn heavy-handedly. But we are glad Mr. Weil wrote this novel. Any stimulus to thought about the teachers in our public schools is welcome.

A MANAS article recently proposed that education is unconcerned with "power." It is true enough that the man who is naturally and willingly a teacher is interested in opening minds rather than manipulating them. But on the contemporary scene, teachers' unions and rival schools of educationists, whose members are presumably devoted to the ideal goals of education, give evidence of wanting to control faculties and school administrators, from the elementary school to the college level, and often seek prestige by political maneuvering. All of which is to say, we suppose, that the general confusion regarding the ends and aims of life is mirrored quite accurately in teachers and their problems.

Mr. Weil, of course, is for integrity and wants it to awaken in two teachers, a principal, and a school board member, to provide that upward-and-onward feeling which marks the climax of his story. The idea is to demonstrate that while compromise may seem essential for any administrator, there are occasions when he becomes utterly valueless to a community unless he is willing to stand firm and take the consequences.

Two or three weighty perorations appear in the course of Mr. Weil's 250 pages; one of these states the case against separate schools for children with superior mental ability. In Mr. Weil's situation, which involves a rapidly expanding educational plant called Green Water High School, a well-meaning school board member named Firenze has suggested that the youngsters who "really want to learn" be housed in another building. They are to be isolated from the thrills of auto-driving instruction and football plus cheer leaders, and helped to get on with the business of developing their minds. This proposal is about to be passed (it would cost the tax-payers very little), when the principal is roused to declare articulate opposition:

> The Firenze P1an, in essence, calls for the division of the children of Green Water into two groups at the age of fourteen. They would be divided into the more intelligent and the less intelligent. There is no way of getting away from this fact. That's exactly what the plan does. There will certainly be a stigma attached to those students who do not qualify for the second high school. And those who do will immediately feel themselves superior to the ones who don't.
>
> The plan calls for switching teachers back and forth between schools as a further economy. This means that Doctor Corwin, for example, will be teaching biology in both schools. It would be only natural for him to save his best efforts for the more responsible students. No doubt students in the second high school would get a great deal more attention than the ones who would be relegated to the present school.
>
> So the smarter get smarter and the dumber get dumber. Please let us not forget that some students are slow starters. They may not blossom until their junior or senior year. These now have the chance to blossom late. Such flowers would be killed at fourteen years of age by not qualifying for the superior school. And I assure you, some of these late-blooming plants can turn out to be very lively indeed!
>
> When all the smoke is cleared away then, we will find that an elite will have been created. Fifteen percent of our children will get a fine education. The rest will play football or watch it being played. They will learn a trade from Pop Gorman, get a smattering of science, English, history, and so on from teachers who are much more concerned with teaching the better students. Then they will be sent on their way.
>
> I think that when you take a small group of people and give them every intellectual advantage you get great minds. But you also get a large group of people who, unable to communicate in any way at all

> with their intellectual superiors, turn to over-simplifications. And greedy men, cruel men, maniacs are always ready to feed them these over-simplifications in return for power. Unable to understand their intellectuals, the people surrender to madmen.
>
> Certainly we need excellence. Certainly we need special instruction for superior kids as well as special instruction for inferior kids. But what we don't need and what we don't want is separation. The Firenze Plan separates our children, leaving most of them in a state of ignorance. Then one day the ignorant will drive out the knowledgeable.

A European-born teacher who supports this plan—it was really her idea in the first place—is later "educated" by the principal:

> I want you to know that, although you were in agreement with Walter Prescott, I know that you never really understood one another. Last night, Mr. Prescott spoke at a meeting of our local chapter of the American Legion. His talk concerned the Firenze P1an, and there is an account of it in today's edition of the Green Water *Gazette.*
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> Briefly, Mr. Prescott told his audience that the proposed new high school would be a training ground for what he called "the technological elite." He explained that the school would emphasize the study of mathematics and science in order to fill what he called "the urgent need" for technically trained men and women in, I quote again, "the struggle against world Communism."
>
> Later, I happened to learn, Mr. Prescott made a deal for American Legion support in the general referendum on the Firenze Plan which will take place as soon as it passes the school board. For this support Mr. Prescott promised to include military training in the school's program for all the boys.
>
> "Oh, no," Erica protested, shock on her face. "That is nothing like the concept I had of the special school."

However much these arguments may over-simplify the situation in many communities, and however dreary the prospects for intellectual awakening in a football-oriented school, these considerations must be heard. The ideal solution for the "gifted" youngster is to encounter a teacher—or rather a whole series of teachers—who simply cannot deny extra time and instruction to those who are eager for it. Some teachers—a good many, we suppose—are in this category. "Ask and it shall be given you" should describe the ideal relationship between pupil and teacher. But as soon as we grant this, we must recognize that the "teacher shortage" is both quantitatively and qualitatively greater than statistical surveys can possibly indicate. While all sorts of experiments are being made in elementary and secondary schools for efficient groupings according to intellectual ability, the dangers and disadvantages stressed by Mr. Weil remain.

FRONTIERS

What Perspectives are "New'?

IF one scans the titles of MANAS articles during, say, the past five years, he may find reason to criticize the editors for naive optimism: so many "new" things are said to be on the way! "New" perspectives in psychology are developing; the "Peace Movement" is becoming sounder and truer; religion is turning less sectarian and therefore more philosophical; and such a unique regenerator as Synanon Foundation is shown to be getting some of the recognition it deserves.

If such reporting and interpretation are supposed to mean that every day in most ways we are getting better and better, that the human species is improving in wisdom, we are reminded of the wonderful optimism of earlier centuries. Carl Becker's *Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* traced the course of one far-reaching dream, but it later became apparent that human society was not going to liberate itself, in orderly progress, from ignorance and cruelty. Yet there is a way in which optimism may help us to see that "progress" is a fact of life, even though cyclical and subject to interruptions, and that if groups and societies do not fulfill the promises of their utopian vision, certain individuals have attained fulfillment in all of the centuries.

This, we take it, is the outlook which the Westerner seldom recognizes in ancient and vaguely revered Eastern scriptures. Not the emergence of an ideal state of affairs, but the emergence of wisdom in a single man, or a few—in spite of as well as because of the psychological environment—is what is important and hopeful. In this perspective, interestingly enough, our respect for the Greeks makes sense; for it was not the perfection of the Greek city-state which came to fulfillment, but rather the perceptions of certain men like Socrates and Plato, who brought into focus philosophical issues of germinal significance for ages to come.

Theseus, favorite of Greek mythological heroes, is nowhere better revealed as Everyman than during his stay in the terrifying labyrinth, where the man-eating Minotaur lay in wait for his victims. If we take the labyrinth to represent the confusion in thought and action which man creates—in society and within himself, simply because he is a man and not a God—Theseus is that seat of indomitable determination in each one of us which is capable of finding a way out. His task is threefold: first the demonic figure of the Minotaur must be found; then he must be eliminated; and finally the way to daylight must be discovered.

Here heroic myth and religious inspiration merge in speaking of ways to escape bondage and find new life. But where is the equivalent of the slender thread provided by Ariadne, so that the hero can find his way? Must each person discover anew the saving religious doctrine, the one true metaphysic, the irreproachable philosophy? Apparently, the thread that leads the way through and out of the labyrinth has something to do with all three, though little to do with formal religion or with any kind of pre-established certainty.

In these considerations, there is no way of avoiding the continual oscillation from metaphysics to psychology, and from philosophy to the turmoil of contemporary existence. The "autonomous" man is not produced, but rather manifests periodically, or cyclically. And no one can tell when manifestations of transcendent insight are likely to take place. Maslow's "peak experiences" are entirely unpredictable in terms of any study of man so far known. This may be a way of saying, in the words from one of the ancient Upanishads:

> Rooted above, with branches below, is this immemorial Tree. It is that bright one, that Eternal; it is called the immortal. In it all the worlds rest; nor does any go beyond it. This is that.
>
> Smaller than small, greater than great, this Self is hidden in the heart of man. He who has ceased from desire, and passed sorrow by, through the favour of that ordainer beholds the greatness of the Self.

> Though seated, it travels far; though at rest, it goes everywhere.

Or from the *Tao Te King:*

> The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. These two things, the spiritual and the material, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery,—the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all spirituality.

In Erich Fromm's *Psychoanalysis and Religion,* a much neglected work, there is a description of what Fromm calls "an attitude of oneness not only in oneself, not only with one's fellow men but with all life and, beyond that, with the universe." Dr. Fromm continues:

> By necessity we can realize only a limited part of all the potentialities within us. We have to exclude many others, since we could not live our short and limited life without such exclusion. But outside the confines of the particular organization of ego are human potentialities, in fact, the whole of humanity. When we get in touch with this disassociated part we retain the individuation of our ego structure but we experience this unique and individualized ego as only one of the infinite versions of life, just as a drop from the ocean is different from and yet the same as all other drops which are also only particularized modes of the same ocean.

Fromm is discussing mystical experience, regardless of religious or cultural background, but there is a close correlation between the breadth of perspective suggested at this metaphysical level and perceptions that flow from discovery of those bonds of kinship which many psychotherapists discover in every variety of human being. An awareness of all other selves as being a part of oneself also finds expression in a surprising number of contemporary novels, an example being provided by a passage in Leo Rosten's *Captain Newman, M.D.:*

> I learned that in some way, however small and secret, each of us is a little mad. I learned that everyone is lonely, at bottom, and cries to be understood. I learned that the dimensions of suffering, of anguish, of pettiness, resentment, rancor, recrimination, envy, lust, despair, exceed the wildest imaginings of those who have not themselves witnessed men in conflict. I learned, too, that man's capacity for sacrifice, for devotion and compassion and that most miraculous of all virtues—simple decency—can forever hearten and surprise us.

This is clearly the language of the labyrinth, by way of a random example from popular fiction. Passages in many war novels show how the informal thinking of the psychoanalyst and the novelist often sound very much the same. We are all in the labyrinth all right, with Ariadne still somewhere around the corner. In such introspective passages, however, there is often evidence of a searching for insight—for Rosten's "fifth dimension which promises to liberate us." Lawrence Kubie once described the spiritual meaning of the psychoanalytic experience: "With the elimination of certain of these inner blinders, it suddenly became clear that *a wholly different person was hidden behind* this façade of hostility and rage and hatred and meanness." (Italics added.)

To recognize that one is indeed in the labyrinth, with only a glimmer of light occasionally glancing down the passages, is to perceive a good deal. Then we may "see" that we must forego what we have long thought to be our only power of sight in order to see with another kind of awareness. Drama and fiction are often "real" in this sense. As Maxwell Anderson remarked in *Off Broadway,* all plays of real moment are "mystery plays." They evoke the shadowy images of another kind of reality—æsthetic, ethical, tragic. They present other dimensions of human existence by implication, and therefore relate to those metaphysical questions regarding human destiny which have always been asked:

> From the beginning of our story men have insisted, despite the darkness and silence about them, that they had a destiny to fulfill—that they were part of a gigantic scheme which was understood somewhere, though they themselves might never understand it. There are no proofs of this. There are only indications—in the idealism of children and young men, in the sayings of such teachers as Christ and Buddha, in the vision of the world we glimpse in

> the hieroglyphics of the masters of the great arts, and in the discoveries of pure science, itself an art, as it pushes away the veils of fact to reveal new powers, new mysteries, new goals for the eternal dream. The dream of the race is that it may make itself better and wiser than it is, and every great philosopher or artist who has ever appeared among us has turned his face away from what man is toward whatever seems to him most godlike that man may become. Whether the steps proposed are immediate or distant, whether he speaks in the simple parables of the New Testament or the complex musical symbols of Bach and Beethoven, the message is always to the effect that men are not essentially as they are but as they imagine and as they wish to be.

The cycle of the hero is always the same, involving the crisis of adventurous discovery, followed by the return to mankind with a "boon."